

THE ARCHITECTS' BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

This second annual meeting of the Architects' Benevolent Society was held in the Freemasons' Tavern, on Wednesday last. In the absence of the president, Mr. Sydney Smirke, from illness, by which he was confined to bed under medical care, Mr. David Mocatta took the chair. The other members of council present were Messrs. Edwards, Hakewill, L'Anson, and Mair. The meeting, we must say, was a very poor one, less than a dozen and a half persons, including the members of council, being present.

The report which was read congratulated the members on the progress of the society, young as it was, and hoped a career of usefulness was open to it. The society had already been enabled to grant relief to several deserving families, particularly to widows and children, living in the provinces as well as in the metropolis. A time was coming, it was to be hoped, when their list of members would contain many names of provincial architects and surveyors as well as metropolitan, and the report urged metropolitan members, so many of whom were flying about by rail to all parts of the country on business or pleasure, to do their utmost to promote the welfare of the society amongst their provincial friends, for whose behoof while in adversity, or for behoof of whose widows and orphans, as well as of those of its metropolitan members, the society was founded.

The receipts of the past year amounted to 493l. 9s. 1d. The expenses of the Society had been 58l. 10s. The donations and subscriptions, to the extent of 400l. had been increased, and a balance of 34l. 19s. 1d. remained in the secretary's hands.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the report. Though an infant society it was gratifying, he observed, to be able to say that they had not only granted relief to a considerable extent, but had invested the basis of a permanent fund. The chairman also urged the members and friends of the institution to do their best to promote its interests.

Some routine business was then transacted, including votes of thanks unanimously accorded to the president, council, treasurer (Mr. Tite), &c.

A public dinner in aid of the funds was proposed, but postponed for the present.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

Reading.—The new Assize Hall, designed by Mr. J. B. Clacy, has been completed by the contractors, Messrs. Carter. Besides separate courts, there are retiring rooms for the judges and for counsel, with accommodation for witnesses, &c. There is a glazed arcade over the outer entrance.

Bodicote (Banbury).—A new school for 90 children has been opened in this village. It is in the Elizabethan style from a design furnished by Mr. J. Livock, of London, architect.

Ryde.—A meeting has been held to forward the movement in favour of a new pier at Ryde. An estimate of the cost and the income has been made, on a plan by Mr. Hellyer.

Portsmouth.—The local commissioners have resolved unanimously to apply to the town gas company to reduce their present charges.

Wells.—The restoration of the choir of the cathedral is approaching completion. The stone stalls (forty-one in number) are nearly finished. The canopies are supported by columns of Purbeck marble, and the caps are of carved stone. The wooden stalls are also in a forward state. The old misericordes are worked in.

Bristol.—A site for the Bristol and Gloucester Diocesan New Training Schools for Mistresses having been purchased, tenders for the new building were called for and sent in, amounting to 8,515l. to which must be added the cost of the site, architect's charges, &c. making a total outlay of 11,580l. The funds are not sufficient by 2,000l. The instructions to the architect have therefore been limited in the meantime to putting in the foundations.

Kinnersley.—A stained glass window, by

Warrington, has lately been erected over the communion table at the east end of the church, by Mr. and Mrs. Lane Freer, of Bishopstone, to the memory of the parents of the latter. It is decorated, of the middle of 14th century, and is divided by stone mullions into three compartments below, supporting a cinquefoil above. In the centre division the angel is announcing to the "women who came early to the sepulchre" the resurrection of our Lord,—"He is not dead but is risen." In either side light, is an angel bearing a scroll. In the cinquefoil above, is the "Last Supper," symbolising faith and love. The rest of the window is filled with tracery and foliage interlacing geometrical designs, surrounded by a border.

Swansea.—The Marquis of Worcester has been entertained at Swansea by Mr. T. Edward Thomas and the corporation, at a public dinner in the Assembly-rooms. The proceedings marked the commencement of the new dock in the Burrows, which has been auspiciously commenced. Mr. Pickering is the contractor for the works.—The new Guildhall and Assize Courts are now completed. The style is Corinthian, the two fronts broken by porticoes, supported by full and three-quarter columns, with capitals sculptured, from a drawing by the architect, Mr. Thomas Taylor, of London, from the Temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome. In front of the portico windows there are balustrades, and the building is surmounted with balustrades and vases. The entrance to the Criminal and Nisi Prius Courts, and to the Council Chamber, is surmounted with the borough arms. The principal entrance and staircase leading to the vestibule is ascended by two flights of stone steps, 10 feet in width, and on the right and left of the upper flight there is an arrangement of Doric columns and pilasters supporting entablature, having niches between for statues, the whole being executed in cement, and the walls jointed to imitate stone. The ceiling is coved and panelled. The vestibule is above 60 feet in length and 20 feet in breadth, lighted from a dome in the centre, and forms the approach to the two law courts, the council chamber, the judge's rooms, the justices and jury rooms, as well as the robing-room for the gentlemen of the bar. The Nisi Prius Court is 46 feet by 30 feet, and by means of a moveable dock, can be appropriated as a second criminal court. The council chamber is 36 feet by 30 feet, and 22 feet in height, the ceiling being panelled with ribs and Corinthian cornice. The windows of this room, and also those of the Nisi Prius Court, have been glazed with vitrified ornamental glass. Under the courts are offices for the hall-keeper, town-clerk, surveyor and receiver of corporation, offices of Local Board of Health, besides two fireproof muniment rooms. Under the Criminal Court there are cells for prisoners. The works have been executed by Mr. R. Richards, of Swansea, under the immediate superintendence of the architect.

Cardiff.—The ground for the new Bute Docks at Cardiff has been staked out by the engineer to the Bute estate, Mr. Plews, sen. of London, and, under the superintendence of the resident engineer, active operations have been commenced. Immediately several hundreds more men will be employed by the contractors, Messrs. Hemmingsway and Pearson, and still larger numbers will be engaged as the spring progresses.—The Waterworks Company of this town has issued advertisements that it is prepared to supply the houses and premises at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, if the rental is under 20l. and at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum if above that sum. This company is also advertising for loans.

Chester.—As some men employed in the Chapter-house of the Cathedral were removing the old flooring, they discovered a long, narrow stone, with two rings in the top of it. Underneath they found the remains of a man. The skull is a very thick one. A rough stone-built opening had been made in a hole in the ground, into which the naked body was placed. At present there is no inscription perceptible. There is a leaden coffin lying near, filled with dirt.

Birmingham.—It appears so little has been subscribed towards the restoration of the ancient church of Birmingham (St. Martin's), that those who did subscribe are about to be asked whether they will allow their donations to be expended in the mere restoration of the tower and spire, on Mr. Hardwick's plan, or have their money returned, after paying the architect's and other charges. A rate and a struggle are anticipated, unless the church be shut up altogether.

Derby.—A meeting has been held here to promote the subscription necessary to the erection of a midland observatory at Nottingham. About 6,000l. will do, exclusive of the founder Mr. Lawson's gift, and of this sum nearly 3,000l. will be contributed at Nottingham, and the remainder is expected from the three adjoining counties.

Nottingham.—The promoters of the bill for deepening and improving the river Idle, and for effecting the drainage of an extensive district adjacent, obtained the report of the examiner on 18th ult. that the standing orders had been complied with. This river is a tributary of the Trent, discharging into it at Stockwith, at which place the sectional area of the Idle was recently considerably enlarged in the erection of a new bridge for the county. This bridge stands entirely upon screw piles, and is from the plans of Messrs. Birch, the engineers to the promoters of the Drainage Bill.

Liverpool.—A report, submitted to the Chamber of Commerce by Mr. W. M. Ross, contains a project, devised by Mr. George Rennie, C.E. for the reclamation from the sea of the vast sand-banks in the estuary of the river Mersey by means of a breakwater, extending seaward from the Black Rock Point, five miles in length. Mr. Rennie thus estimates the cost and profit:—To 5 miles of breakwater, at 60,000l. per mile, 300,000l.; to converting 20,000 acres of sand banks into good land, at 20l. per acre, 400,000l.; to contingencies, at 15 per cent. 105,000l.; total, 805,000l. By value of 20,000 acres of made land, at 60l. per acre, 1,200,000l.; leaving a profit over and above the cost of 395,000l. The *Liverpool Times* says that so far from paying the company 18,000l. a year for the supposed improvement of the river, the conservators of the river would not allow the plan to be carried out, even if the company would pay them five times 18,000l.

Newark.—An influential public meeting of those interested in the re-pewing and restoration of Newark church was held in the Town Hall on Tuesday week, for the purpose of passing resolutions in favour of the object, and of raising, by voluntary subscription, a fund sufficient for the execution of the work.—At a recent meeting of the Newark Improvement Commissioners, the report of Mr. Crowley, engineer, employed to test the accuracy of the plan of the town prepared by Mr. Bailey, was read. It was resolved unanimously that Mr. Bailey be appointed the surveyor and inspector of nuisances. At a subsequent meeting the surveyor was instructed to report on new drains, necessary for draining the town effectually, the outfall to be given into the Trent from the bottom of North-gate, near the Spittals.

Shields.—The North Shields Water Works Company have commenced laying pipes to the village of Tynemouth.

Walker (Newcastle).—Public meetings have been held here for the promotion of means for the erection of public schools for the district. After various plans had been fully discussed, says the *Gateshead Observer*, Messrs. Losh, Wilson, and Bell, and the Walker Alkali Company, announced their intention of building rooms, capable of containing 400 scholars, for the use of the works and neighbourhood. The Rev. C. Thompson also announced his intention of procuring additional subscriptions towards the erection of a national school for the parish, when various friends offered their support.

Edinburgh.—Memorials have been sent to the town council by the Scottish Society of Antiquaries and the Scottish Society of Arts, in reference to the restoration of the brasses